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MISS JENNIE M. KUYPER
Yokohama, Japan

—A Memorial

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A Memorial

MISS JENNIE M. KUYPER

Principal of Ferris Seminary, Yokohama, Japan, who lost her life in the earthquake, September 1, 1923.

WOMAN'S BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Reformed Church in America

25 East 22nd Street New York

Miss Kuyper's last words to the Graduating Class of Ferris Seminary, Commencement, 1923:

"I bid you Godspeed upon the voyage of life, desiring for each one of you this one thing—life—full, joyous and strong, found through losing it in service to others."

MISS JENNIE M. KUYPER

MISS KUYPER was born and brought up in Pella, Iowa. She graduated from Central College, Pella, and received a degree from the University of Chicago. After teaching in Pella schools and also in Central College she became Lady Principal of Rochester Academy in Wisconsin, where she taught Latin and Greek. It was while teaching in Rochester that the gradual desire to engage in missionary work became definite. She felt that those who had had the opportunity to receive Christian education and training and had no one depending on them for support should feel responsible for the work of Foreign Missions. Although leaving home and dear ones was hard, she never felt that she was making a sacrifice.

Arriving on the field, in addition to language study, Miss Kuyper had the oversight of the evangelistic work engaged in by the Ferris Seminary students in the neighborhood Sunday Schools. After passing the language examinations she added to her regular classroom work weekly visits to the homes of the pupils. The work of the New Testament League was largely the result of her influence.

After a term at Ferris Seminary, upon her return from furlough, she was at Kagoshima for a brief period in charge of the evangelistic work among the women and the High School Girls among whom she organized a Y. W. C. A. The monthly meeting in the dormitory of the weaving factory, and a weekly meeting for nurses in the Government hospital, were among her activities. From this work in 1922 Miss Kuyper was called by the Mission to the Principalship of Ferris Seminary and became also a Trustee of the Woman's Union Christian College in Tokyo.

Tributes given at the Memorial Service of the Boards of Foreign Missions, Reformed Church in America, in the Marble Collegiate Church, New York, November 13, 1923.

Mrs. DeWitt Knox,

President of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions

In 1917 I had the privilege of visiting Ferris Seminary for the second time. The Seminary was then in charge of Miss Kuyper, owing to the furlough of Dr. Booth. So great was the impression of the poise and lovely spirit of the leader that when the time came for Dr. Booth's successor to be chosen, it seemed to me, as well as to other members of the Board when asked, that no one could be better fitted for that position. She was also a delightful hostess, full of humor and courtesy, but nothing dimmed the spiritual force of her sturdy character.

Rev. William I. Chamberlain, Ph.D.,

Corresponding Secretary, Board of Foreign Missions

A good many years ago a Scotch Professor, having a deep insight into life and its objectives, visited this country in successive years and much impressed that generation of university students. The address by which he was perhaps best remembered was entitled, "The Greatest Thing in the World," which in his judgment was "Love." But is this the greatest thing in the world?

The greatest thing in the world is personality. Love is but a part of it, supplementing and crowning its other parts. We may not be able to define personality, but we know that it includes beauty and majesty of physique, vigor and courage of spirit, keenness of mind, all the subtle graces of mind and heart, high spiritual vision, deep insight, purity, dignity and serene poise of spirit. All these combine to make what we call personality.

It is these qualities of mind and heart and spirit that we think of this afternoon as we meet to commemorate the passing of a personality from an earthly to a heavenly environment. I came only this morning upon some of the letters which Miss Kuyper wrote to the Woman's Board at the time when she entered into correspondence with a view to becoming a foreign missionary. One or two of these letters are very self-revealing. Let me quote them here:

"Rochester, Wis., October 5, 1905.

"Woman's Board of Foreign Missions:

"In answer to the call that came to the young women of the Church through the *Christian Intelligencer* of a week ago regarding the need in the Amoy region, China, of more workers, I would like to enter into correspondence with you regarding the work, the requirements on part of applicant; in short, all I should know with a view to offering my services to the Board. Personally I am ready to offer myself as such applicant *unconditionally,* but cannot do so until my family are fully reconciled to it—which I trust will be soon. I will defer giving you any facts regarding myself until I hear from you and learn what information is desired.

"Very sincerely yours,

"JENNIE M. KUYPER."

Following upon her appointment, she labored quietly but faithfully and effectively in Japan for six years, for the most part in connection with Ferris Seminary, when she was advised to return to this country because of the discovery by the physicians of the germs of a threatening disease. Upon her return to America, she quietly withdrew to a climate favorable to overcoming this disease and later applied to the Woman's Board for permission to return

to her work in Japan. Her recovery not then being considered complete, her application at that time was not accepted, whereupon she wrote another of those self-revealing letters:

"October 8, 1912.

"Thank you for the kind words in which the hard message was sent. I could not write before for I could not face the bitter disappointment.

"But I know our Father can make no mistakes and to His leading *I have committed the further direction of my life.* The last hymn our girls sang for me just before leaving the school was 'He Leadeth Me.' Had I known then that His leading was not to bring me back to them the parting would have been unbearably hard."

A little later she again renewed her application and was again asked to continue longer in this country, whereupon she wrote as follows to the Woman's Board:

"The keenest disappointment my life has ever known came to me through your decision to not send me back to Japan. While I realize that the interests of the work and consideration for my health made no other decision possible it none the less meant to me that which I cannot yet face very bravely and calmly—the giving up of a work in which I thought God could use me and to which I so longed to give my whole life."

These letters surely reveal those fine qualities of courage and resignation which were so supremely exhibited on the first day of September last when she was called suddenly to lay down her life.

It is perhaps proper that we should remind ourselves of the tragic circumstances of her death in order that we may draw the

lessons from her life. On the day preceding the earthquake, in response to her own sense of duty, she returned to Yokohama for the purpose of making preparation for the opening of Ferris Seminary, of which she had recently become the Principal. At the hour of high noon on the fatal first of September she was in her study. The Japanese clerk of the school was in the adjoining verandah. Without warning the terrific calamity came upon the city. The building being thoroughly shaken, the clerk made his escape, but Miss Kuyper being in an inner room was not able to leave the building before it collapsed. The clerk returned shortly after the building had collapsed and called down from the top of the ruins and received an answer from Miss Kuyper. He could not see her in the darkness below but she could see him in the light above. She said that she was held fast by her arms but her body was free. The faithful Japanese friend endeavored to get assistance for the purpose of relieving Miss Kuyper, but was unsuccessful. Finally an hour had passed; the consuming fire was approaching; Miss Kuyper realized it and finally said to the faithful friend who was trying in vain to secure her release, that he must now leave her to secure the safety of himself and his family and said to him as a parting message, "God's will be done. Give my love to my friends."

A few days later a committee of the Mission searched the ruins and found two human bones. These were later reverently buried in the cemetery at Nagasaki.

An interpretation of Psalm XCI has recently been given me by a member of the Woman's Board in connection with the tragic death of Miss Kuyper, which it seems to me appropriate to pass on to those who are here assembled to commemorate the life and death of a noble personality. The great assurance of the opening verses of this Psalm is not so much of safety from destruction as of *freedom from fear* in the hour of great danger. The words

of this Psalm are so tender and yet so strong that they seem peculiarly appropriate to the life of our friend:

> He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
> I will say of the Lord He is my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.
> Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.
> He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
> Thou shalt not be **afraid** for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
> Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

Miss Olivia H. Lawrence,

Editorial Secretary, Woman's Board of Foreign Missions

Following the growing custom of laying a wreath as a loving tribute on a monument or grave, today mine is a tribute of friendship, and the wreath is one of lilies, pure in their fragrance and fragrant in their purity, dignified, radiant; symbolic of the life and character of Jennie M. Kuyper. The one reason that I speak is because I was the first of the Woman's Board to meet Miss Kuyper. It was in June, 1905, when General Synod was in session at Asbury Park that I was asked to meet her at the railroad station. By some intuitive instinct we mutually recognized each other. The years that lie between are of a friendship that counted.

The first impressions were of sincerity, strength, saneness, spirituality; and the correspondence of years deepened the impression. Our lives touched tenderly when her health was in question regarding her return to Japan and her submission then to God's will was the same that marked her entire life.

It was during Miss Kuyper's initial term of service while attending a conference in Pella that at the close of the morning session a dear, elderly lady said to me "You are Jennie's friend, I am Jennie's mother. Do come to our house." I went to their house in the afternoon and met that consecrated family.

Christian character building was pre-eminent in all Miss Kuyper's teaching, whether in educational or evangelistic work.

The many references to her in the Missionary magazines and letters are of her rare character and the irreparable loss to the work in Japan; these are words we cherish.

On that last day a former student, now teaching in a Government school, where there is no Christian sympathy, called to see Miss Kuyper. Before leaving they had a Bible talk and prayer and the final message of the beloved teacher was—"Remember wherever you are and whatever you are doing, God is always with you." That was at 11:30 o'clock on the morning of September 1st. Little did that unshakably spiritual soul realize what the next half hour was to bring, but her faith held. As she climbed the steep ascent of heaven through peril, toil and pain her farewell words were: "It is evidently God's will; it is all right. Give my love to everyone." Her submission to God's will, the sacrifice of her life, will ever be held in tender, sacred memory. She fought with radiant valor and was faith *full* unto death.

Rev. Eugene S. Booth, D.D.,
Principal Emeritus of Ferris Seminary

I esteem it a privilege to bear my testimony to the life work and character of Jennie M. Kuyper, who for fourteen years of her eighteen years' missionary experience, was a member of my household, a member of the staff of Ferris Seminary and a most genial, efficient, consecrated helper, always wise in counsel, always with the supreme end in view—the ideal for which Christian Missions stand, Christian life. . . . Instinctively, we are so built as to sorrow. Over physical pain of others we do not mourn, but we are sorry that somehow or other in the inscrutable providence of Almighty God, Jennie M. Kuyper was called to this supreme suffering, and I note that 1,200 or more alumnae in Japan

have sorrowed for that experience. The members of the Japanese staff, who, praise God, all were saved, have sorrowed for that experience. The Japanese Mission have sorrowed for that experience, the members of the Woman's Board and Men's Board of the Reformed Church have sorrowed for that experience and every woman and every man that has heard the name of Jennie M. Kuyper throughout the Reformed Church not only, but throughout Christendom, have sorrowed for that experience. We may mourn for those temporal things that have passed; we mourn that Ferris Seminary, the product of so much consecration, so much prayer, so much self-denial, so much sacrifice, is but ashes. So far as the tangible things are concerned and because of your prayers and your devotion, I can say in this presence, it was one of the best equipped, best manned institutions in the Orient and it had the promise of a magnificent future under the leadership of Jennie M. Kuyper. One year ago I left Yokohama feeling that this institution, so precious to me, into which I had woven the best of my life, was in the best possible hands.

A picture comes before me today as we stood upon the deck of our ship: Miss Kuyper and her staff, a multitude of the graduates from Tokyo and nearby places, and a chosen number from each of the six classes permitted to stand upon the wharf to say goodbye, singing "God be with you 'till we meet again." Miss Kuyper was not a singer but she had a wonderful appreciation of good singing and her countenance wreathed in smiles as that prayer went up in song. That picture is vivid before me and a year, less than a year, after that date, word came speeding through the air, without wire, with just ether of the air, telling us that in six short minutes an area of more than 300 square miles had been shaken down and reduced to ashes by fire.

We sorrow for the suffering that apparently is necessary for the development of that character which enables us to live on with God.

At the Memorial Service, First Church,

Pella, Iowa, September 23, 1923.

Miss Eliza P. Cobb,

Corresponding Secretary, Woman's Board of Foreign Missions

We are met this afternoon to memorialize not a tragedy, but a triumph, not a great catastrophe, but a great victory. God has said "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," and this is Jennie Kuyper's Coronation Day.

When the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions commissions a new missionary, there is read as a part of the service the 91st Psalm (vs. 1, 4, 5, 11, 12). This promise God has fulfilled to Jennie Kuyper. Dwelling in the secret place of the Most High she was not afraid "for the destruction that wasted at noonday" and surely the angels of God bore her up in their hands to Him whom she had made her habitation.

Mrs. Van Peursem of Arabia has spoken of a visit she paid to Miss Kuyper in Japan. When she had looked about at Ferris Seminary with its fine equipment, its bright-faced girls and contrasted it with the humble beginnings in Arabia, she said to Miss Kuyper "Oh how I envy you your success." Miss Kuyper replied, with that humility so characteristic of her, "It is not success that counts, but faithfulness. When we get to the end of life and meet the Master, He will not ask 'Have you been successful?' but, 'Have you been faithful?'" Faithfulness was the keynote of Miss Kuyper's life.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS

MRS. HUBERT KUYPER

It is inevitable that the girls will go back to the school they so love, and it may be that her going and her message may have a wider influence than years of work, for hearts are very tender just now as all are suffering such great losses of every kind. Miss Kuyper's remains are to be interred at Nagasaki, beside those of Mr. Anthony Walvoord, the Principal of Steele Academy.

MISS SARA M. COUCH

Miss Kuyper's last words have made a great impression on the teachers and pupils not only, but on many others. She was a wonderful missionary, her place will not be filled, but God knows best.

MRS. D. C. RUIGH

The serene, grand personality of Miss Kuyper seems enshrined in our hearts; something imperishable broods over that desolation of ash and destruction, once Ferris Seminary. We see her calm and brave and smiling quietly sending on her message to all who have come under the benediction of her friendship.

The task of being Principal of Ferris looks too big for me. The fear of failing to come up to my ideal of what should be done by the one in charge makes me shrink from it. There are so many grave problems, so much to be done that requires more wisdom, tact, patience, courage and self-confidence than I possess. I feel my shortcomings at every point.

I am inclined to think the middle class in Japan, at least the young women of that class, are the most influential and hence the most desirable to win. Those of the richer families lead more secluded lives, while the middle class young women are many of them going out as teachers and filling business positions.

I want a closer walk with God that will give me a deeper sense of His guidance and direction in my life and work, and a clearer appreciation of the greatness of every small opportunity

MINUTES

MINUTE ADOPTED BY THE JAPAN MISSION
of the
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA
Upon the Death of
MISS JENNIE M. KUYPER
Yokohama, September 1, 1923

IN MEMORIAM

"The Japan Mission of the Reformed Church in America has again been called upon to mourn the death of one of its members. In the great calamity which befell the cities of Tokyo and Yokohama on September 1, 1923, Miss Jennie M. Kuyper was called to higher service. She had returned from her summer vacation in the hills somewhat early in order that she might prepare for the opening of the autumn term of school. She was always most conscientious in the discharge of her duties. Her early return to her post was but an added illustration of this characteristic. Shortly before noon she had been in conference with one of the graduates and had closed the conference with a season of prayer. The two then went out together as far as the gate. Within a few moments after her return to her office the great earthquake came and destroyed the main building of the School in a moment's time. The shock was without warning and the building collapsed so suddenly that it was not possible for her to make her escape. She was pinned in under the heavy timbers from whence it was impossible to rescue her. Those who talked with her before she died speak of her faith and fortitude in the last moments of her life. This has been an inspiration to her associates in the Mission and amongst the Japanese. In the hour of approaching death she was as calm, serene, strong in her faith and trust in the Lord, as she had always been in her life.

"The Lord's ways are past finding out. We know from His Word and from our own experiences that He knows what is best, and that He makes no mistakes. May her immediate family, her friends in the homeland, as well as her associates in the work here, learn to say: 'Thy will be done.'

"We recognized in Miss Kuyper a woman of rare ability, possessed

of sound judgment and unusual poise of character. Her faith was calm and assured. Her outlook upon life full of hope. A quiet joy pervaded all her activities and relationships.

"She looked upon her pupils as sacred trusts, as gifts from God, for whose training and development in the best things of life she was responsible. The quiet and helpful influence she exerted will long be felt in the lives of all those who came in contact with her. She won and held a large place in the hearts of her pupils and of all those with whom she was associated in the work of the Kingdom.

"RESOLVED: That the Mission express its deep sense of the loss it has sustained. Further that we earnestly pray that the example of faithfulness and loyalty may be an inspiration to us all in the work yet before us. That we pray that the Lord's comforting grace be abundantly vouchsafed to her brothers, sisters, and other relatives in the homeland.

"RESOLVED: That a copy of these Resolutions be placed in our Minutes and that a copy be sent to the family. Also that they be published in the Church papers."

L. J. SHAFER,
Secretary, Japan Mission.

IN MEMORIAM

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF FERRIS SEMINARY desires to express its deep sense of loss in the death of

MISS JENNIE M. KUYPER,

the Principal, in the earthquake of September 1, 1923.

A teacher in America before coming to the mission field, a member of the faculty of Ferris Seminary for several years, acting principal during the absence of Dr. Booth in America, she brought to the principalship high and suitable qualifications for successful administrative work. Her one year of work as principal was marked by such faithfulness to the school's best interests, such tact and resourcefulness in meeting new and difficult problems, and such consecration of all her time and strength to the School, that the Board of Directors had every confidence in her administration. She desired above all else that the teaching in school should be character building, and that the curriculum and school activities should be permeated with a spiritual atmosphere and directed toward a Christian purpose.

But we desire to pay tribute not only to her success as a principal, but also to her quiet, sincere personal Christian life. Her strength

was indeed found in "quietness and confidence" and she knew what it meant to "wait upon the Lord." The steady purposefulness of her life, crowned by the precious sacrifice of her death, is our inspiration to carry on the work she loved.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

(Signed) GERTRUDE H. STEGEMAN,
TETSU SATO,
JEANE NOORDHOFF,
Committee.

AN APPRECIATION

At a meeting of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, held November 13, 1923, the following appreciation of

MISS JENNIE M. KUYPER

was ordered to be placed permanently in its Minutes:—

By the death of Miss Jennie M. Kuyper, whose devotion to duty made her a victim of the earthquake and fire at Yokohama on September 1, 1923, the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions has lost one of its most able and consecrated missionaries.

Quiet and reserved, yet ever most sympathetic and genial; patient, thorough and inspiring in her scholastic work; seeking constantly a closer walk with God for herself, and a surrender to the claims of Christ for her pupils; she exerted a strong influence upon the whole school throughout the years when she was a teacher in Ferris Seminary, an influence which continued in similar ways when she was an evangelist at Kagoshima. And when, distrusting her own ability but obeying what she felt to be the call of God, she became the Principal of Ferris Seminary, though permitted to serve but one brief year, her far-reaching plans for its educational work, and her constant emphasis of its Christian life, bore fruit to a noticeable degree, and promised to bear much more,—a promise which, alas! she was not to see realized.

Her life in many ways was a triumph of faith in God, revealed increasingly as the years went by, and shown most clearly in the supreme test of its closing hour. Deeply as we feel her loss, she herself has bid us say, "It is God's will." And from the heart we pray that, since the chariot of fire has parted her from us, a double portion of her spirit may fall upon those who have labored with her, and upon all who knew and loved her.

(MRS. WM. BANCROFT) ELISE W. HILL,
Foreign Corresponding Secretary for Japan.

Ferris Seminary, 178 Bluff, Yokohama